

carefully on today's proposals and to do everything in their power to make permanent the progress of the past 3 years by taking the next steps to implement the Good Friday agreement.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders on Education Reform Legislation

August 2, 2001

Listen, thank you all for coming. It's my honor to meet with the Senate conferees and the chairman of the Education Committee in the House and, of course, the Secretary of Education to discuss the Conference Committee on Education and the education reform package and how best to—what I can do to help move the bill and to work with the Members to get a—to continue the spirit of reform that was a part of the Senate bill and the House bill.

Today one of the things that I hope the Nation notices is that the NAEP is out, the national assessment statistics. And one of the things—one of the powerful statistics is that States that use strong accountability systems, States that measure, States that say every child could matter are the States that perform best when it comes to teaching children the basic skills, in this case, math. It so happened to be that one of those States was Texas; the other was North Carolina.

But it is a strong message to the advocates for reform who sit here in the Oval Office, strong message for the Members who doubt whether or not accountability is important, that accountability is crucial for reform. And after all, we're all united in making sure every child can learn in America and no child, not one child is left behind.

So I want to thank the Members for coming. I'm hopeful that we can get a bill on my desk as soon as possible. I know that's the intent of the two chairmen. And when I do—when it is, and when I sign it, it will be really good for the public education of the country.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:51 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to NAEP, the National Assessment

of Education Progress. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Patients' Bill of Rights

August 2, 2001

Today's action brings us an important step closer to ensuring that patients get the care they need and that HMOs are held accountable.

I appreciate the bold leadership and hard work of Speaker Hastert, Congressman Norwood, Congressman Fletcher, and others for their efforts to make patient protections a reality for all Americans after years of gridlock.

As this bill heads to the conference committee, I remain committed to extending the hand of cooperation to all who share a commitment to achieving real results for better health care for every American.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting on the Administration's Agenda

August 3, 2001

Good afternoon. The Vice President and I are pleased to welcome the Cabinet to the Rose Garden. Together with Congress, we are proving that a new tone, a clear agenda, and active leadership can bring significant progress to the Nation's Capital. We are ending deadlock and drift and making our system work on behalf of the American people.

Six months ago I chose a distinguished Cabinet, took a solemn oath, and promised to fight for the things close to my heart. My administration pledged to bring stability and high standards to Washington and to lead for the sake of all Americans.

Six months later I'm proud of my Cabinet and the White House staff, who have worked with such energy and have brought integrity to their jobs. I'm grateful for the good will shown by Congress, and I am pleased with the progress we have made together, progress that touches every American family.

We acted quickly to pass the first major tax cut in a generation to help families in an economic slowdown and to help rebuild the momentum of our economy.

Both Houses of Congress have passed major education reform legislation, which will bring a new passion for excellence to America's public schools. We have broken 6 years of gridlock in the task of protecting patients from arbitrary medical decisions made by bureaucrats. The House has passed a bill to promote the work of mentoring groups, homeless shelters, and drug treatment facilities. And I have had positive discussions with leaders in the United States Senate on this matter.

The House has also passed an energy plan that addresses current needs. We have put our foreign policy on sound footing. We are strengthening our relationships with our allies and moving to build a world that trades more freely.

We have taken the first steps toward revitalizing and transforming our military so it can meet the threats and challenges of the future. Today the Senate joined with the House to provide our farmers with \$5.5 billion of emergency help. We passed a budget resolution that, for the first time in recent memory, has been respected, not ignored. And we are on our way to the second largest surplus in history, as well as paying down a significant amount of U.S. debt.

On this path, we are headed for a year of strong, meaningful legislative achievements. And I want to express my thanks for every legislator who made tough decisions, every legislator who chose long-term progress over short-term political gain.

There's much more to do. In September the second stage of our work begins, and I will be guided by a few goals. First, we must finish the work we have begun. On the topics of education and the disadvantaged, our Nation has needs that will not wait. Americans, come September, will be watching. They want us to be principled, not partisan. They want us to look for agreement instead of looking for fights and arguments. Americans know obstructionism when they see it, and when necessary, I will point it out.

Second, the Congress must live within the generous limits of our budget. Irresponsible

spending is a threat to our economy and a threat to the essential functions of our Government. I will protect Medicare, Social Security, and our Armed Forces. And I will protect the American taxpayers. The Congress, through its budget resolution, has given its word on spending. So far, Congress has kept its word, and it must continue to do so.

Third, within a limited budget we must have an active, compassionate Government. Beginning in September, I'll be proposing creative ways to tackle some of the toughest problems in our society. We must take the side of parents trying to raise responsible, motivated, and moral children. We must help disadvantaged Americans find opportunity and ownership and the tools to succeed in our free economy. We must show that our welcoming society values the ideals and contributions of immigrants. We must challenge Americans to be citizens, not spectators, in the renewal of their neighborhoods and their cities.

In a few days, I'm headed home to the heartland to listen to the American people and to talk about the values that unite and sustain our country. Members of Congress are going home, as well. When we all come back in September, so many accomplishments are within our reach, and I look forward to the work ahead.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:21 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks in a Ceremony Honoring Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong

August 3, 2001

The President. Please be seated. It's my privilege to welcome you all to the White House and to welcome my friend, a true champ, a great American, Lance Armstrong. America's incredibly proud of Lance, and I know two people who are really proud of him as well, that's Kristin, his wife, and young Luke. Thank you all for coming, as well.

We're also honored to have Chris Fowler of ESPN here. I'm so—thank you for coming, Chris. I was telling Chris a little earlier, it's one of the programs I can watch on TV